

AL Championship Series: Mariners vs Blue Jays

Friday, October 17, 2025

Seattle, Washington, USA

T-Mobile Park

Toronto Blue Jays

Ernie Clement

Addison Barger

Pregame 5 Press Conference



ERNIE CLEMENT: I just think it's all nine guys in the lineup trusting the guy behind 'em and there's not one guy that's trying to do too much. Obviously, Vlady's had a pretty darn good postseason. But it's been 1 through 9 and 1 through 13 on the position player side. So I think it's just trusting the guy behind you and not trying to do too much and keeping it really simple. It's been a different guy every day, so it's cool to be a part of.

Q. (No microphone.)

ERNIE CLEMENT: You don't have to go up there and try to hit a home run every at-bat. It's just try to get on base for the guy behind you.

ADDISON BARGER: For some of us.

ERNIE CLEMENT: Well, he tries to hit a home run every time. He swings harder than anybody.

But, no, it's each guy just staying within themselves and us being a real team offense instead of just one guy hitting a home run every time.

ADDISON BARGER: Yeah, I would attribute a lot of our success to our hitting coaches too. We have a great staff behind us, and they have a really good idea of what each pitcher's going to do to us, and they give us a good plan and approach every at-bat.

Q. You mentioned Vlady having a really great postseason, but what's it like for you guys to watch him behind the scenes and just see what goes into that every day?

ERNIE CLEMENT: Well, it's definitely fun to watch. It makes our job easy. We just got to get on base for him. He's a special player, a special talent, an awesome guy to be around. He's earned every bit of success that he's having and I couldn't be happier for him. Just really proud of the work he's put in. To do it on the biggest stages, it's a testament to his work.

Q. In Toronto, obviously, it was a tougher time for the offense, and then in the last couple games, you guys

Q. Ernie, the other night after the game, you said in the clubhouse -- you called yourself the worst hitter in baseball a few years ago. What have been the adjustments? I'm looking at the metrics and it's nothing obviously stands outs. I know, like, your in-zone contact rate is up. But what has been the key to your last two years?

ERNIE CLEMENT: Yeah, just started to lean into my strength a little bit, which is putting the bat on the ball. I kind of tried to work the count a little bit and maybe try to draw some walks and hit for more power, and that's just not really my game. Over the last couple years, I've learned to just make it really hard on the opposing pitchers with my ability to get hits on pitchers' pitches, and I've just really been more aggressive.

Q. Can you expand a little bit more on, like, what that was like mentally? Because I know a lot of players go through that trying to figure out who they are, and being able to find out who you are and really lean into that, what was that like?

ERNIE CLEMENT: Yeah, I've learned from all my failures and I've had quite a few of those failures. So, yeah, I mean, it's difficult in the moment when you know you're not getting the results you want, but I stayed positive and stayed confident and just really trusted my ability and my love for the game.

Q. For either one or both of you guys, obviously, it's really hard to hit now in baseball, but the Blue Jays had more hits than any other team. So what is it besides the talent -- you guys, obviously, are talented -- in terms of the approach or that allows you to get so many hits in this era?



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have really gone off. Any way to explain that? Is it just baseball? Is there something that you guys see that's been different?

ERNIE CLEMENT: I think it's just the highs and lows of the game that we play. It's just weathering the storm, and sometimes balls aren't going to fall and sometimes you're just going to get 15 hits in a game. It's finding different ways to win, and even when you don't have your best stuff, you still got to find a way to win.

Whether we have 15 hits or two hits, I think this team can win a baseball game either way. So it's just about any given day just trying to find a way to win.

Q. Ernie, what has it meant to you to play along with Andrés Giménez on defense of that side of the infield, what have you learned from him, and what has it meant for you guys this last couple of days what he's done in this series?

ERNIE CLEMENT: Yeah, it's funny, he's been my favorite guy to watch on defense since I played against him in Double-A. He was playing in Binghamton, I was playing with Akron, and I just -- I watched him take ground balls at shortstop, and I just -- I mean, I was blown away with just how smooth it was.

Yeah, the more I watched him play, I realized how good mentally he was. His internal clock is really special. It's been so fun playing alongside him now. I'm just blown away every day watching him play defense. It's special. To me, he's just clearly the best defender in baseball, so it's been awesome.

Q. I know we're living in the moment and for today's game, but Ernie, I just want to rewind yesterday to the mound visit with Schneider and Max. Your facial reaction kind of went viral. What was it like being a part of that moment and being around Max?

ERNIE CLEMENT: I have been kind of waiting for that all year. I've seen it on TV just from watching baseball over the last 15 years or whatever. He's so fired up and wants to be out there and wants to kick your ass. So to be on that side of it, like, I've been kind of waiting for that all season, so it was so, so fun to be a part of. I couldn't help but laugh. It was just so funny because after he comes out, he kind of flips the switch and goes back to being that fun-loving jokester. It's like he's got two personalities. It's hysterical. So I was really happy for him to get that job done.

Q. For both of you guys, you play multiple positions. At what point is it just baseball instincts taking over or

what do you do to stay sharp at all your different positions? Addison, you can start.

ADDISON BARGER: Yeah, sure. I think it's just about preparing before the game. Obviously if I know I'm at third base, I'll take reps at third, or if I'm in the outfield, I'll take reps in the outfield. It begins to get tough when I'm spending a month or two at one position, and then you get thrown back out in the outfield, for example.

But, yeah I would say a lot of it is just baseball instinct and just kind of trusting the work you've done over the year, you know, whether you're playing there consistently or not. It's a little bit more work, but you just got to spend time in both positions.

Q. Early on, when the bats weren't red hot, April and May, and you guys were kind of around .500, how important was the team defense to just kind of keep you guys afloat early in the season?

ERNIE CLEMENT: I think it goes back to us just trying to find different ways to win baseball games. You're not going to get 15 hits every game. You're not going to score 10 runs. So preventing runs is huge. Great pitching has helped us all season.

I just think that you go day by day, and when the pitching is on, you just got to scratch one or two across, and when the bats are on, you can kind of lean in that. So it's just multidimensional.

Q. Josh Naylor was saying last night he's big fan of yours and he didn't like having to bump into you last night. But what is it about Josh's game that goes beyond kind of the numbers? Because it seems like there's a lot more to him than just the stat sheet.

ERNIE CLEMENT: Yeah, it's like getting hit with a freight train when he's coming in. He plays the game so hard, and I like getting hit around a little bit. It reminds me of my hockey days. But he is such a special player. I learned so much watching him play. To me, he reminds me a lot of Vlad. He's a guy with a ton of power, but he just is such an advanced hitter in his approach. He has the 40-home run power, but he just goes up there and just -- he can hit a little single the other way or do some damage.

So he's just so -- his approach is just so advanced. He knows the game really, really well. He's got some of the best instincts I've ever seen on a baseball field. You know, a guy who is second percentile in speed has 30 stolen bases. That doesn't happen unless you know the game inside and out. He's one of my favorite players in baseball, not even just because I played with him and he's a great



guy, but I just love the instincts he plays with.

Q. Broadly, as you've gone through this playoff experience and played this deep into October, is it what you expected, or is anything about this experienced surprised either one of you guys?

ADDISON BARGER: Yeah, I would say it's kind of how I expected it. Definitely the crowds are more involved and energetic and you feel it on every pitch. That adrenaline for us just kind of takes over. Even though it's Game 100 whatever for us, we're all beat up and tired, but that, the fans and their energy they bring every day kind of carries us through the games, for sure.

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